

# Weekly American

DEVOTED TO POLITICS, LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, NEWS, AND GENERAL MISCELLANY.

WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 1858.

NO. 5.

VOL. 1.

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Single copy, one year, \$2.00  
Three copies, one year, 5.00  
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Ten copies, one year, 15.00  
Single copy, six months, 1.00  
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## PROSPECTUS OF THE WASHINGTON AMERICAN.

We can hardly think it necessary to urge upon those who hold that Americans ought to rule America, the importance of having a paper at the seat of the Federal Government, which shall enunciate and advocate the doctrines of the American party.

A paper issued from any of the great centres of a nation, but especially from the political Metropolis, in the present age, not in this country only, but in Great Britain, France, and wherever there is the least freedom of discussion, is a medium through which those holding similar sentiments in regard to public affairs and public policy, may make known, discuss and defend their views, and expose the impropriety of the principles, and the impolicy of the measures of their antagonists. It should earnestly labor to give proper direction to public opinion by enlightening the public mind.

The AMERICAN is the only paper published at the seat of the Federal Government which advocates American doctrines; the only central of the party stationed where a near and clear view can be had of the movements and doings of their opponents at their headquarters. Here political information concentrates, and from hence it radiates to every part of the empire; here party measures and movements are determined, and political campaigns planned; here stratagems are concocted and thwarted, and here at certain seasons of the year politicians must congregate; here, in short, is the centre of the great political maelstrom in which so many thousands are constantly plunging and forever gyrating.

If the American party is desirous of being a national party, it should not be without a paper here through which it can make known to all people its views, aims and opinions, and which shall also refute the calumnies that are from time to time uttered against it through ignorance or a less excusable motive; and we, therefore, take upon the AMERICAN, standing as it will stand, upon the platform of the American party, advocating as it will advocate, the paramount rights of native-born citizens, eschewing, as it will eschew, all interference with slavery as a national concern, and maintaining, as it will maintain, perfect freedom of opinion and of conscience in religion, will find favor in the eyes of all truly patriotic citizens in the land, and commend itself to their generous support.

Let us may not have been specific enough in declaring our principles, we add, that the FAREWELL ADDRESS of the Father of his country, as illustrated by the broad light of his administration, is our political text-book and *raison d'être*; and shall be our compass and chart.

## PLATFORM.

Of the American Party, adopted at the session of the National Council, June 2, 1857.

1st. An humble acknowledgment to the Supreme Being, for His protecting care vouchsafed to our fathers in their successful Revolutionary struggle, and hitherto manifested to us, their descendants, in the preservation of the liberties, the independence, and the union of these States.

2d. The perpetuation of the Federal Union, as the palladium of our civil and religious liberties, and the only sure bulwark of American Independence.

3d. Americans must rule America, and to this end native-born citizens should be selected for all State, Federal, and municipal offices or government employment. In preference to all others:—

4th. Persons born of American parents residing temporarily abroad, should be entitled to all the rights of native-born citizens; but

5th. No person should be selected for political station, (whether of native or foreign birth,) who recognizes any allegiance or obligation of any description to any foreign prince, potentate or power, or who refuses to recognize the Federal and State constitutions (each within its sphere) as paramount to all other laws, as rules of political action.

6th. The unqualified recognition and maintenance of the reserved rights of the several States, and the cultivation of harmony and fraternal good will, between the citizens of the several States, and to this end, non-interference by Congress with questions appertaining solely to the individual States, and non-interference by each State with the affairs of any other State.

7th. The recognition of the right of the native-born and naturalized citizens of the United States, permanently residing in any Territory, the right to frame their constitution and laws, and to regulate their domestic and social affairs in their own mode, subject only to the provisions of the Federal Constitution, with the privilege of admission into any such Territory, ought to participate in the formation of the constitution, or in the enactment of laws for said Territory or State.

8th. An enforcement of the principle that no State or Territory ought to admit others than citizens of the United States to the right of suffrage, or of holding political office.

9th. A change in the laws of naturalization, making a continued residence of twenty-one years, of all not heretofore provided for, an indispensable requisite for citizenship hereafter, and excluding all paupers and persons convicted of crime, from landing upon our shores; but no interference with the vested rights of foreigners.

10th. Opposition to any union between Church and State; no interference with religious faith, or worship, and no test cases for office.

11th. Free and thorough investigation into any and all alleged abuses of public functionaries, and economy in public expenditures.

12th. The maintenance and enforcement of all

laws constitutionally enacted, until said laws shall be repealed, or shall be declared null and void by competent judicial authority.

13th. A free and open discussion of all political principles embraced in our platform.

From the Cincinnati Times.

## PENSEE A MOI.

BY N. B. WILSON.

When music wakes the stillness of the night,  
And sings to thee some long remembered lay,  
When Fancy glows with visions of the light,  
And on thy soul lets fall her cheering ray;  
When Hope enchants thine ear with tales of bright  
And happy hours that are not far away;  
And when with those thou lov'st, thou fain would'st  
Be, Oh, *donne pensee a moi, ma chere amie!*

When thou dost stand beneath the moon's pale rays  
And memory recalls bright days of yore;  
When loved ones flit before thy spirit's gaze,  
And thou dost gaze again life's pleasures o'er,  
When thou rememberest those dear old days,  
When love was ours—will they return no more?  
When love's sweet memory's joys are gone to thee,  
Oh, *donne pensee a moi, ma chere amie!*

When Eve embraces the earth with dewy tears,  
And thou art sad, and silent and alone;  
When all thy mind is filled with gloomy fears,  
And grief's dark shadow o'er thy path is thrown;  
When faintest sky the sorrow-cloud appears,  
Which tells thy heart life's brightest dreams have flown;  
When from thyself thou would'st but canst not flee,  
Oh, *donne pensee a moi, ma chere amie!*

From the Louisville Journal.

## THE LETTER CHEST.

You ask, if I happily gave to thee,  
Gems from the heart's deep mine!  
Glad friendship's glances long ago—  
The grave of "Auld Lang Syne."  
Familiar hands, clasped far, but warm,  
Clasp there, O'er years apart,  
Old words familiar faces wear—  
Old autographs of heart!

No! fling them not into the flames!  
Dim, old words, crumbling one by one,  
Would loom, like ghosts, into our eyes—  
Some Memory's dying Sun!  
Kindle within our hearts their flames!  
Feeling their dreamy eloquence—  
The Past—whose flowers in these were sown—  
Will rise like frankincense!

The world, in time, is ever new;  
Dead summer, live in flowers, and sing;  
Old June-lands show their roses through,  
Heaven breathes the older Spring!  
Those dear old words! they kept glad time  
In sunny days, and rainy weather,  
And to the music of their feet  
Still all things sing together.

Old lips that speak no more, I hear,  
Old vanished faces brightening come,  
Old footsteps travel strangely near  
From happy days of home!  
I feel the red blood of the Past  
Pulse through Time's veins again, in light,  
I see their warm hands from their hearts,  
Extended while they write!

The following quaint *chanson a boire* is not new, but it is good enough to bear repeating, and it may possess the charm of novelty to some of our readers. Ellis, in his *Specimens of Early English Poetry*, tells us that the author of the song, John Stoll, was born at Grantham, in Lincolnshire, in 1542, and educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, where he succeeded M. A. and D. D. After passing through several gradations in the church, and having been successively master of St. John's and Trinity Colleges, and Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge, he attained the mitre of Bath and Wells, after the demise of Bishop Godwin, and died in 1607. Sir John Harrington speaks of him with glowing commendation in his brief "State of the Church."

He is believed to have written the earliest English drama that exhibited any approach to regular comedy. The drama, "Grammer Gorton's Needle," in which the song occurs, was acted in 1565, though not printed till 1575—*Union*.

## A SONG.

I cannot eat but little meat,  
My stomach is not good;  
But sure, I think that I can drink  
With him that wears a hood.  
Tho' I go bare, take ye no care,  
I am nothing a cold,  
I stuff my skin so full with wine  
Of jolly good ale and old.  
Back and side go bare, go bare,  
Both foot and hand go cold;  
But, belly, God send thee good ale enough,  
Whether it be new or old.

I have no roast but a nut-brown toast,  
And a crab laid in the fire;  
A little beer I shall do me stead,  
Back bed I will desire.  
Wroth, no more, no wind I throw  
Can hurt me if I will,  
I am so wrapt, and thoroughly lapt  
Of jolly good ale and old.

Back and side go bare, &c.  
And Tib, my wife, that as her life  
Loreth well good ale to seek,  
Full oft drinks she till ye may see  
The tears run down her cheek:  
Then dost she trowl to me the bowl,  
Even as a maltworm seek,  
And saith, "Sweetheart, I took my part  
Of this jolly good ale and old."

Back and side go bare, &c.  
Now, let them drink till they nod and wink,  
Even as good fellows should;  
They shall not miss to have the bliss  
Of good ale both bring and go;  
And all poor souls that have scoured bowls,  
Or have them lustily trowl'd,  
God save the lives of them and their wives,  
Whether they be young or old.

Back and side go bare, &c.

An imitation of the above:  
The country 't'wixt us is a desperate state,  
All law and order gone;  
But Democrats have cunning rals,  
Take care of number one.  
Though rascals rule, he is a fool  
Who won't swear fealty,  
To 'd' powers that be, and take his fee,  
From great Democracy.

The Public good! ha! ha! ha! ha!  
And the country's welfare!  
But let us have rich "Spoils" enough,  
And heaps of "Plunder" share.

Let patriots march, and look with scorn  
On party tools and hacks,  
"The Spoils" we win, then drink our gin,  
And each his joke he cracks.  
What's honesty? A fool is he  
Who won't rob Uncle Sam;  
And patriotism's foggyism,  
Not worth ainker's dam.

The Public good! ha! ha! ha! ha!  
And the country's welfare!  
And let us have rich "Spoils" enough,  
And heaps of "Plunder" share.

I care for naught, no not a groat,  
But "Spoils" and "Plunder," air;  
Give me a job that I may rob  
My dearest "Uncle Sam,"  
I'll care no more about a "poor,  
Poor people," than a clam.  
That, sir, is true, "twixt me and you)  
Gin'wine Democracy.  
The public good! ha! ha! ha! ha!  
And the country's welfare!  
But let us have rich "Spoils" enough,  
And heaps of "Plunder" share.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### THE IRON SHROUD.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "FIRST AND LAST."

The castle of the Prince of Toff was built on the summit of the towering and precipitous rock of Scylla, and commanded a magnificent view of Sicily in all its grandeur. Here, during the wars of the middle ages, when the fertile plains of Italy were devastated by hostile factions, those prisoners were confined, for whose ransom a costly price was demanded. Here, too, in a dungeon, excavated deep in the solid rock, the miserable victim was immured, whom revenge pursued—the dark, fierce, and unquenching revenge of an Italian heart.

Vivensio—the noble and the generous, the fearless in battle, and the pride of Naples in her sunny hours of peace—the young, the brave, the proud Vivensio, flit beneath this subtle and remorseless spirit. He was the prisoner of Toff, and he languished in that rock-encircled dungeon, which stood alone, and whose portals never opened twice upon a living captive.

It had the semblance of a vast cage, for the roof, and floor, and sides, were of iron, solidly wrought, and spaciouly constructed. High above, there ran a range of seven grated windows, guarded with masonry bars of the same metal, which admitted light and air. Save these, and the tall folding doors beneath them, which occupied the centre, no chink, or chasm, or projection, broke the smooth black surface of the walls. An iron bedstead, littered with straw, stood in one corner; and beside it, a vessel with water, and a coarse dish filled with coarse food.

Even the intrepid soul of Vivensio shrunk with dismay as he entered this abode, and heard the ponderous doors triple-locked by the silent ruffians who conducted him to it. Their silence seemed prophetic of his fate, of the living grave that had been prepared for him. His menaces and his entreaties, his indignant appeals for justice, and his impatient questioning of their intentions, were alike vain. They listened, but spoke not. Fit ministers of a crime that should have no tongue!

How dismal was the sound of their retiring steps! And, as their faint echoes died along the winding passages, a fearful presage grew within him, that never more he saw, or voice, or tread, of man, would greet his senses. He had seen human beings for the last time! And he had looked his last upon the bright sky, and upon the smiling earth, and upon a beautiful world he loved, and whose mission he had been! Here he was to end his life—a life he had just begun to revel in! And by what means? By secret poison? or by murderous assault? No—for them it had been needless to bring him thither. Famine perhaps—a thousand deaths in one! It was terrible to think of it, but yet it was more terrible to picture long, long years of captivity, in a solitude so appalling, in a loneliness so dreary, that thought, for want of fellowship, would lose itself in madness, or stagnate into idiocy.

He could not hope to escape, unless he had the power, with his bare hands, of rending asunder the solid iron walls of his prison. He could not hope for liberty from the relenting mercies of his enemy. His instant death, under any form of refined cruelty, was not the object of Toff, for he might have inflicted it, and he had not. It was too evident, therefore, he was reserved for some premeditated scheme of subtle vengeance; and what vengeance could transcend in fiendish malice, either the slow death of famine, or the still slower one of solitary incarceration, till the last lingering spark of life expired, or till reason fled, and nothing should remain to perish but the brute functions of the body?

It was evening when Vivensio entered the dungeon, and the approaching shades of night wrapped it in total darkness, as he paced up and down, revolving in his mind these horrible forebodings. No tolling bell from the castle, or from any neighboring church or convent, struck upon his ear to tell how the hours passed. Frequently he would stop and listen for some sound that might betoken the vicinity of man; but the solitude of the desert, the silence of the tomb, are not so still and deep, as the oppressive desolation by which he was encompassed. His heart sunk within him, and he threw himself dejectedly upon his couch of straw. Here sleep gradually obliterated the consciousness of misery, and bland dreams wafted his delightful spirit to scenes which were once glowing realities for him, in whose ravishing illusions he soon lost the remembrance that he was Toff's prisoner.

When he awoke, it was daylight; but how long he had slept he knew not. It might be early morning, or it might be sultry noon, for he could measure time by no other note of his progress than light and darkness. He had been so happy in his sleep, and friends who loved him, and the sweeter endearments of those who loved him as friends could not, that in the first moments of waking, his startled mind seemed to admit the knowledge of his situation, as if it had burst upon it for the first time, fresh in all its appalling horrors. He gazed round with an air of doubt and amazement, and took up a handful of the straw upon which he lay, as though he would ask himself what it meant. But memory, too faithful to her office, soon unveiled the melancholy

past, while reason, shuddering at the task, flashed before his eyes the tremendous future. The contrast overpowered him. He remained for some time lamenting, like a truth, the bright visions that had vanished; and reselling from the present, which clung to him as a poisoned garment.

When he grew more calm, he surveyed his gloomy dungeon. Alas! the stronger light of day only served to confirm what the gloomy indistinctness of the preceding evening had partially disclosed, the utter impossibility of escape. As, however, his eyes wandered round and round, and from place to place, he noticed two circumstances which excited his surprise and curiosity. The one, he thought, might be fancy, but the other was positive. His pitcher of water, and the dish which contained his food, had been removed from his side while he slept, and now stood near the door. Were he ever inclined to doubt this, by supposing he had mistaken the spot where he saw them over night, he could not, for the pitcher now in his dungeon was neither of the same form nor color as the other, while the food was changed for some other of better quality. He had been visited therefore during the night. But how had the person obtained entrance? Could he have slept so soundly, that the unlocking and opening of those ponderous portals were effected without waking him? He would have said this was not possible, but that in doing so, he must admit a greater difficulty, an entrance by other means, of which he was convinced there existed none.

It was not intended, then, that he should be left to perish from hunger. But the secret and mysterious mode of supplying him with food, seemed to indicate he was to have no opportunity of communicating with a human being. The other circumstance which had attracted his notice, was the disappearance, as he believed, of one of the seven grated windows that ran along the top of his prison. He felt convinced that he had observed and counted them; for he was rather surprised at their number, and there was something peculiar in their form, as well as in the manner of their arrangement at unequal distances. It was so much easier, however, to suppose he was mistaken, than that a portion of the solid iron, which formed the walls could have escaped from its position, that he soon dismissed the thought from his mind.

Vivensio partook of the food that was before him, without apprehension. It might be poisoned; but if it were, he knew he could not escape death, should such be the design of Toff, and the quickest death would be the speediest release.

The day passed wearily and gloomily; though not without a faint hope that, by keeping watch at night, he might observe when the person came again to bring him food, which he supposed he would do in the same way as before. The mere thought of being approached by a living creature, and the opportunity it might present of learning the doom prepared, or preparing, for him, imparted some comfort. Besides, if he came alone, might he not in a furious onset overpower him? Or he might be accessible to pity, or the influence of such munificent rewards as he could bestow, if once more at liberty and master of himself. Say he were armed. The worst that could befall, if not armed, nor prayers, nor force prevailed, was a faithful blow, which, though dealt in a damned cause, might work a desired end. There was no chance so desperate, but it looked lovely in Vivensio's eyes, compared with the idea of being totally abandoned.

The night came, and Vivensio watched.—Morning came, and Vivensio was confounded! He must have slumbered without knowing it. Sleep must have stolen over him when exhausted by fatigue, and in that interval of feverish repose, he had been baffled; for there stood his replenished pitcher of water, and there his dish of food! Nor was this all. Casting looks towards the windows of his dungeon, he counted but five! Here was no deception; and he was now convinced there had been none the day before. But what did all this portend? Into what strange and mysterious den had he been cast? He gazed till his eyes ached: he could discover nothing to explain the mystery. That it was so, he knew. Why it was so, he racked his imagination in vain to conjecture. He examined the doors. A simple circumstance convinced him they had not been opened.

A wisp of straw, which he had carelessly thrown against them the preceding day, as he passed to and fro, remained where he had cast it, though it must have been displaced by the slightest motion of either of the doors. This was evidence that could not be disputed; and it followed there must be some secret machinery in the walls by which a person could enter.—He inspected them closely. They appeared to him one solid and compact mass of iron, or joined, if joined they were, with such nice art, that no mark of division was perceptible.—Again and again he surveyed them—and the floor—and the roof—and that range of visionary windows, as he was now almost tempted to consider them; he could discover nothing, absolutely nothing, to relieve his doubt, or satisfy his curiosity. Sometimes he fancied that altogether the dungeon had a more contracted appearance—that it looked smaller; but this he ascribed to fancy, and the impression naturally produced upon his mind by the undeniable disappearance of two of the windows.

With intense anxiety, Vivensio looked forward to the return of night; and as it approached, he resolved that no trachorous sleep should again betray him. Instead of seeking his bed of straw, he continued to walk up and down his dungeon till day-light, straining his eyes in every direction through the darkness, to watch for any appearance that might explain these mysteries. While thus engaged, and as nearly as he could judge, (by the time that afterwards elapsed before the morning came) at about two o'clock, there was a slight tremulous motion of the floors. He stooped. The motion lasted nearly a minute, but it was so ex-

remely gentle, that he almost doubted whether it was real or only imaginary. He listened. Not a sound could be heard. Presently however, he felt a rush of cold air blow upon him, and dashing towards the quarter from whence it seemed to proceed, he stumbled over something which he judged to be the water ewer. The rush of cold air was no longer perceptible; and as Vivensio stretched out his hands, he found himself close to the walls. He remained motionless for a considerable time, but nothing occurred during the remainder of the night to excite his attention, though he continued to watch with unabated vigilance.

The first approaches of the morning were visible through the grated windows, breaking with faint divisions of light, the darkness that still pervaded every other part, long before Vivensio was enabled to distinguish any object in his dungeon. Instinctively and fearfully he turned his eyes, hot and inflamed with watching, towards them. There were none! He could see only four; but it might be that some intervening object prevented the fifth from becoming perceptible; and he waited impatiently to ascertain if it were so. As the light strengthened, however, and penetrated every corner of the cell, other objects of amazement struck his sight. On the ground lay the broken fragments of the pitcher he had used the day before, and at a small distance from them, nearer to the wall, stood the one he had noticed the first night. It was filled with water, and beside it was his food. He was now certain, that, by some mechanical contrivance, an opening was obtained through the iron wall, and that through this opening the current of air had found entrance. But how noiseless! For had a feather almost waved at the time, he must have heard it. Again he examined that part of the wall; but both to sight and touch it appeared one even and uniform surface, while to repeated and violent blows, there was no reverberating sound indicative of hollow-ness.

This perplexing mystery had for a time withdrawn his thoughts from the windows, but now, directing his eyes again towards them, he saw that the fifth had disappeared in the same manner as the preceding two, without the least distinguishable alteration of external appearance. The remaining four looked as the seven had originally looked; that is, occupying, at irregular distances, the top of the wall on that side of the dungeon. The tall folding door, too, still seemed to stand beneath, in the centre of these four, as it had at first stood in the centre of the seven. But he could no longer doubt, what on the preceding day, he fancied might be the effect of visual deception. The dungeon was smaller. The roof had lowered—and the opposite ends had contracted the intermediate distance by a space, equal he thought to that over which the three windows had extended. He was bewildered in vain imaginings to account for these things. Some frightful power—some devilish torture of mind or body—some unheard-of device for producing exquisite misery, lurked, he was sure, in what had taken place.

Oppressed with this belief, and distracted more by the dreadful uncertainty of whatever fate impended, than he could be dismayed, he thought, by the knowledge of the worst, he sat ruminating, hour after hour, yielding his fears in succession to every haggard fancy. At last a horrible suspicion flashed suddenly across his mind, and he started up with a frantic air. "Yes!" he exclaimed, looking wildly around his dungeon, and shuddering as he spoke—"Yes! it must be so! I see it—I feel the maddening truth like scorching flames upon my brain! Eternal God!—support me! it must be so!—Yes, yes, that is to be my fate! You roof will descend—these walls will hem me round—and slowly, slowly, crush me in their iron arms! Lord God look down upon me in mercy strike me with instant death! Oh, bend—oh, devil—is this your revenge?"

He dashed himself upon the ground in agony;—tears burst from him, and the sweat stood in large drops upon his face—he sobbed aloud—he tore his hair—he rolled about like one suffering intolerable agony of body, and would have bitten the iron floor beneath him; he breathed fearful curses upon Toff, and the next moment passionate prayers to heaven for immediate death. Then the violence of his grief became exhausted, and he lay still, weeping as a child would weep. The twilight of departing day shed its gloom around him ere he arose from that posture of utter and hopeless sorrow. He had taken no food. Not one drop of water had cooled the fever of his parched lips. Sleep had not visited his eyes for six and thirty hours. He was faint with hunger; weary with watching, and with the excess of his emotions. He tasted of his food; he drank with avidity of the water; and reeling like a drunken man to his straw, cast himself upon it to brood again over the appalling image that had fastened itself upon his almost frenzied thoughts.

He slept. But his slumbers were not tranquil. He resisted, as long as he could their approach; and when, at last, enfeebled nature yielded to their influence, he found no oblivion from his cares. Terrible dreams haunted him—ghostly visions harrowed up his imagination—he shouted and screamed, as if he already felt the dungeon's ponderous roof descending on him—he breathed hard and thick, as though writing between his iron walls. Then would he spring up—stare wildly about him—stretch forth his hands, to be sure he yet had space enough to live—and, muttering some incoherent words, sink down again, to pass through the same fierce vicissitudes of delicious sleep.

The morning of the fourth day dawned upon Vivensio, but it was high noon before his mind shook off its stupor, or he awoke to a full consciousness of his situation. And what a fixed energy of despair sat upon his pale features, as he cast his eyes upward, and gazed upon the three windows that now alone remained! The three!—there were no more!—and they seemed to number his own allotted days. Slowly and

calmly he next surveyed the top and sides, and comprehended all the meaning of the diminished height of the former, as well as of the gradual approximation of the latter. The contracted dimensions of his mysterious prison were now too gross and palpable to be the juggle of his heated imagination. Still lost in wonder at the means, Vivensio could put no cheat upon his reason, as to the end. By what horrible ingenuity it was contrived that walls, and roof, and windows, should thus silently and imperceptibly, without noise and without motion almost, fold, as it were within each other, he knew not. He only knew they did so; and he vainly strove to persuade himself it was the intention of the contriver to rack the miserable wretch who might be immured there, with anticipation, merely, of a fate, from which, in the very crisis of his agony, he was to be relieved.

Gladly would he have chanced even to this possibility, if his heart would have let him; but he felt a dreadful assurance of its fallacy. And what matchless inhumanity it was to doom the sufferer to such lingering tortures—to lead him day by day to so appalling a death, unsupported by the consolations of religion, unvisited by any human being, abandoned to himself, deserted of all, and denied even the sad privilege of knowing that his cruel destiny would awaken pity! Alone he was to perish! alone he was to wait a slow coming torture, whose exquisite pangs would be inflicted by that very solitude, and that tardy coming!

"It is not death that I fear," he exclaimed, "but the death I must prepare for! Methinks, too, I could meet even that—all horrible and revolting as it is—if it might overtake me now. But where shall I find fortitude to tarry till it come? How can I outlive the three long days and nights I have to live? There is no power within me to bid the hideous spectre hence—none to make familiar to my thoughts, or myself patient of its errand. My thoughts, rather, will flee from me, and I grow mad in looking at it. Oh, for a deep sleep to fall upon me! that so, in death's likeness, I might embrace death itself, and drink no more of the cup that is presented to me, than my fainting spirit has already tasted."

In the midst of these lamentations, Vivensio noticed that his accustomed meal, with the pitcher of water, had been conveyed, as before, into his dungeon. But this circumstance no longer excited his surprise; his mind was overwhelmed with others of a far greater magnitude. It suggested, however, a feeble hope of deliverance; and there is no hope so feeble as not to yield some support to a heart bending under despair. He resolved to watch, during the ensuing night, for the signs he had before observed; and should he again feel the gentle, tremulous motion of the floor, or the current of air, to seize that moment for giving audible expression to his misery. Some person must be near him, and within reach of his voice, at the instant when his food was supplied; some one, perhaps, susceptible of pity. Or if not, to let even that his apprehensions were just, and his fate was to be what he foreboded, would be preferable to a suspense which lung upon upon the possibility of his worst fears being visionary.

The night came; and as the hour approached when Vivensio imagined he might expect the signs, he stood fixed and silent as a statue. He feared to breathe, almost, lest he might lose any sound which would warn him of their coming. While thus listening, with every faculty of mind and body strained to an agony of attention, it occurred to him he should be more sensible of the motion, probably, if he stretched himself along the iron floor. He accordingly laid himself softly down, and had not long been in that position when, yes—he was certain of it—the floor moved under him! He sprang up, and in a voice suffocated nearly with emotion, called aloud. He paused—the motion ceased—he felt no stream of air—all was hushed—no voice answered to his—burst into tears; and as he sunk to the ground, in renewed anguish, exclaimed,—Oh my God! my God! You alone have power to save me now, or strengthen me for the trial you permit."

Another morning dawned upon the wretched captive, and the fatal index of his doom met his eyes. Two windows!—and two days—all would be over! Fresh food—fresh water! The mysterious visit had been paid, though he had implored it in vain. But how awfully was his prayer answered in what he now saw! The roof of the dungeon was within a foot of his head. The two ends were so near, that in six paces he trod the space between them. Vivensio shuddered as he gazed, and as his steps traversed the narrow area. But his feelings no more vented themselves in frantic wallings.

With folded arms, and clenched teeth, with eyes that were bloodshot with much watching, and fixed with a vacant glare upon the ground, with a hard, quick breathing, and a hurried walk, he strode backwards and forwards in silent musing for several hours. What mind shall conceive, what tongue utter, what pen describe the dark and terrible character of these thoughts? Like the fate that moulded them, they had no similitude in the wide range of this world's agony for man. Suddenly he stopped, and his eyes were riveted upon that part of the wall which was over his bed of straw. Words are inscribed there! A human language, traced by a human hand! He rushed towards them; but his blood freezes as he reads:

"I, Ludovico Sforza, tempted by the gold of the Prince of Toff; spent three years in contriving and executing this accursed triumph of my art. When it was completed, the perfidious Toff, more devil than man, who conducted me hither one morning, to be witness, as he said, of its perfection, doomed me to be the first victim of my own pernicious skill; lest, as he declared, I should divulge the secret, or repeat the effort of my ingenuity. May God pardon him, as I hope he will me, that ministered to his unhalloved purpose! Miserable wretch, whoever thou art, that rodest these lines, follow thy knees, and invoke as I have done. His sustaining mercy, who alone can nerve thee to meet the vengeance of Toff, armed with his

tremendous engine which, in a few hours, must crush you as it will the needy wretch who made it."

A deep groan burst from Vivensio. He stood like one transfixed, with dilated eyes, expanded nostrils and quivering lips, gazing at this fatal inscription. It was as if a voice from the sepulchre had sounded on his ears, "Prepare!" Hope forsook him. There was his sentence, recorded in those dismal words. The future stood unveiled before him, ghastly and appalling. His brain already feels the descending horror,—his bones seem to crack and crumble in the mighty grasp of the iron walls! Unknowing what it is he does, he fumbles in his garment for some weapon of self-destruction. He clutches his throat in his convulsive gripe, as though he would strangle himself at once. He stares upon the walls, and his warring spirit demands "Will they not anticipate their office if I dash my head against them?" An hysterical laugh chokes him as he exclaims, "Why should I?" He was but a man who died first in their fierce embrace; and I should be less than man not to do as much!"

The evening sun was descending, and Vivensio beheld its golden beams streaming through his soul at the sight! It was a precious link, that united him, for the moment, with the world beyond. There was ecstasy in the thought. As he gazed, long and earnestly, it seemed as if the windows had lowered sufficiently for him to reach them. With one bound he was beneath them—with one wild spring he clung to the bars. Whether it was so contrived, purposely to madden with delight the wretch who looked, he knew not; but, at the extremity of a long vista, thro' the solid rocks, the ocean, the sky, the setting sun, the olive groves, shady walks, and in the farthest distance, delicious glimpses of magnificent Sicily, burst upon his sight. How exquisite was the breeze as it swept across his cheek, loaded with fragrance! He inhaled it as though it were the breath of continued life. And there was a freshness in the landscape, and in the rippling of the calm green sea, that fell upon his withering heart like dew upon the parched earth. How he gazed, and panted, and still clung to his hold, sometimes hanging by one hand, and sometimes by the other, and then grasping the bars with both, as loath to quit the smiling paradise outstretched before him; till exhausted, and his hands swollen and benumbed, he dropped helpless down, and lay stunned a considerable time, by the fall.

When he recovered, the glorious vision had vanished. He was in darkness. He doubted whether it was not a dream that had passed before his sleeping fancy; but gradually his scattered thoughts returned, and with them came remembrance. Yes! he had looked once again upon the gorgeous splendour of nature! Once again his eye had trembled beneath their veiled lids, at the sun's radiance, and sought repose in the soft verdure of the olive tree, or the gentle swell of undulating waves.

Oh, that he were a mariner, exposed upon those waves to the worst fury of the storm and tempest; or a very wretch, loathsome with disease, plague-stricken, and his body one leprous contagion from the crown to sole, hunted forth to gasp out the remnant of infectious life beneath those verdant trees, so he might shun the destiny upon whose edge he tottered! Vain thoughts like these would steal over his mind from time to time in spite of himself; but they scarcely moved it from that stupor into which it had sunk, and which kept him during the whole of the night, like one who had been drugged with opium. He was equally insensible to the calls of hunger and of thirst, though the third day was now commencing since even a drop of water had passed his lips. He remained on the ground, sometimes sitting, and sometimes lying; at intervals, sighing heavily; and when not sleeping, silently brooding over what was to come, or talking aloud, in disordered speech, of his wrongs, of his friends, of his home, and of those who loved, with a confused mingling of all.